

## **I-195 REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT COMMISSION**

### **MEETING OF PARKS DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE**

**September 12, 2014**

The Parks Design Subcommittee (the “Subcommittee”) of the I-195 Redevelopment District met on Friday, September 12, 2014 beginning at 2:30 PM, at the offices of the Commerce RI, located at 315 Iron Horse Way, Suite 101, Providence, Rhode Island.

The following Subcommittee members were present and participated throughout the meeting: Ms. Barbara Hunger, Ms. Diana Johnson, and Mr. John Kelly.

Also present were Ms. Jan Brodie, District Executive Director, and Project Associate, Kate Holguin. In addition, David Freeman of CDR Maguire, Lambri Zerva of RI DOT, and Bonnie Nickerson of the City of Providence were also present.

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 PM.

#### **1. Approval of the Minutes of the August 19, 2014 Parks Design Subcommittee Meeting.**

The minutes of the August 19, 2014 Parks Design Subcommittee Meeting were distributed to the Subcommittee members in advance of the meeting. Ms. Johnson suggested a few edits to the language of the minutes. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes, subject to these edits. A vote was taken and voting in favor were: Ms. Hunger, Ms. Johnson, and Mr. Kelly. Voting against: none.

#### **2. Specific Elements of the West Side Park.**

A discussion was held surrounding specific elements of the West Side Park. Members of the Parks Design Subcommittee and Ms. Brodie visited Boarding House Park in Lowell, which is part of the National Park System. The takeaways from this visit were that a performance space is complex in its infrastructure needs (utilities, sound, storage, ticketing, fencing, presenter back space, seating...) and need to be well-considered before the space is built. The Lowell park was built specifically for events and went through many years of evolution before it was successful at its current level of programming. Building a stage, without enough attendance or use, is a deterrent to the park’s desirability, and a full-time programmer is needed to insure that doesn’t happen. The possibility of setting up infrastructure for construction of a pavilion in the West Side Park at a later time was discussed. Space for concessions could also be put off until there is a demand. The Subcommittee reached a consensus that a budget be put together to build a structure that is not as large and dramatic as the pavilion, and incorporate storage space and bathrooms, and that additional money originally allotted to pavilion construction be redirected to something else in the West Side Park, such as the water feature. Additionally, the width of the pathway by the new structure should be decreased to allow more natural, open space in the lawn area of the park. The built structure would be designed to accommodate a future event pavilion, and natural

elements (such as trees) could be used to maintain the pedestrian space behind the future pavilion.

### **3. Response to Public Comment from the August 19, 2014 Meeting**

The Subcommittee addressed the public feedback from the August 19, 2014 meeting.

**Dan Boudouin:** Mr. Boudouin made comments about the strength of the connectivity from the Dorrance Street edge of the West Side Park into downtown Providence. While it is difficult to make the entrance wider, it could have a more impactful entrance with pedestals or planters as markers at the Dorrance Street entrance. It was suggested that Brown University also be more involved in the Dorrance Street entrance design since the Continuing Education building abuts this park entrance. The City is working on this grander entrance concept and will keep the Commission informed.

**Barnaby Evans:** Mr. Evans suggested that the park design incorporate more river access for potential future events in the park such as Waterfire. David Freeman of CDR Maguire suggested a design change DOT is considering that would include a stonedust walkway along the top of the riverwall rip rap from the existing west side walkway to the bridge. This walkway would be cost neutral and provide space from which to observe Waterfire and other river events at a connected level with the river. It was also discussed whether a water-level walkway such as exists on the east side could be priced for a future construction project. The area under the new pedestrian bridge cannot be easily converted at a later date to walkway once the bridge is built. DOT is estimating what the cost of this piece of a water-level walkway would be.

**Susan Korte:** Ms. Korte suggested that the West Side Park incorporate more shade and trees, and be used as an educational opportunity for its visitors to learn more about the relationship of the river to the bay. Informational panels about Providence's marine life are included in the West Side Park design. The conundrum between shade trees, flexible open space and sight lines to the water was discussed.

**Scott Turner:** Mr. Turner also wanted to promote more shade and trees in the West Side Park, as well as both large and small open spaces within the park. He also urged that maintenance requirements for the park be kept simple.

### **4. Next Steps**

The Subcommittee reached a consensus to create a bullet point list of Subcommittee recommendations for park design, which will be circulated to the Commission and presented in October. After receiving full Commission input, the recommendations will be forwarded to DOT, the park and pavilion designers and incorporated into their 90% design schemes for the parks and bridge.

There being no further business, upon motion duly made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 3:55 pm.



I-195 Parks Design Subcommittee Member